General Assembly

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Agenda item 119 (*b*)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/56/583/Add.2)*]

56/163. Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/144 of 9 December 1998, by which it adopted by consensus the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,

Reiterating the importance of the Declaration and its promotion and implementation,

Noting with deep concern that, in many countries, persons and organizations engaged in promoting and defending human rights and fundamental freedoms are facing threats, harassment and insecurity as a result of those activities,

Noting also with deep concern the considerable number of communications received by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders that, together with the reports submitted by some of the special procedure mechanisms, indicate the serious nature of the risks faced by human rights defenders,

Noting further with deep concern that, in a number of countries in all regions of the world, impunity for threats, attacks and acts of intimidation against human rights defenders persists and that this has a negative impact on the work and safety of human rights defenders,

Emphasizing the important role that individuals, non-governmental organizations and groups play in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including in combating impunity,

Welcoming the cooperation between the Special Representative and other special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling that the primary responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights rests with the State, and noting with deep concern that the activities of non-State actors pose a major threat to the security of human rights defenders,

Emphasizing the need for strong and effective measures for the protection of human rights defenders,

1. *Calls upon* all States to promote and give full effect to the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms;[1]

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the reports of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights defenders;[2]

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of combating impunity, and in this regard urges States to take appropriate measures to address the question of impunity for threats, attacks and acts of intimidation against human rights defenders;

4. *Urges* all Governments to cooperate with and assist the Special Representative in the performance of her tasks and to furnish upon request all information in the fulfilment of her mandate;

5. *Requests* all concerned United Nations agencies and organizations, within their mandates, to provide all possible assistance and support to the Special Representative in the implementation of her programme of activities;

6. *Calls upon* all States to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of human rights defenders;

7. *Decides* to consider this question at its fifty-seventh session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

88th plenary meeting
19 December 2001

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[1] Resolution 53/144, annex.

[2] A/56/341 and E/CN.4/2001/94.